

# Anchorage District Office

Gary Reimer, District Manager

BLM

## Bering Glacier workshop

The BLM hosted a Bering Glacier workshop at the Campbell Creek Science Center March 20 & 21. The BLM and our Bering Glacier partners—Southern University, Michigan Tech, University of Alaska, and U.S. Geological Survey—reviewed last year’s research work and discussed objectives for the coming field season.



Bering Glacier is the largest and longest glacier in continental North America and is also the largest surging glacier in America. Bering Glacier alone covers more than 6 percent of the glacier-covered area of Alaska and may contain 15-20 percent of Alaska’s total glacier ice.

The BLM, in cooperation with USGS, operates the Bering Glacier field camp each summer. Partnerships with an increasing number of universities engaged in climate change research help fund the camp. The BLM will continue to look for ways to transition the field camp to a cost reimbursable operation by 2009.

## Anchorage Field Office news

### Land use planning

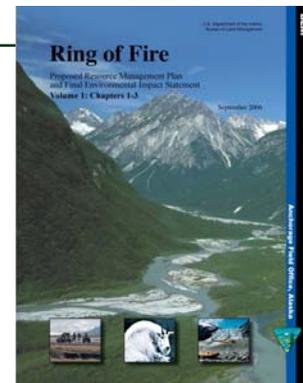
**Ring of Fire:** The BLM released the Record of Decision for the Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan on March 21, 2008. During protest resolution for the Proposed RMP, the BLM made the following changes:

1. In response to a protest from the Alaska Coalition/American Rivers, the BLM will defer Wild and Scenic River suitability determinations for segments identified in the RMP as “Eligible.” The BLM will manage these rivers in a manner that maintains or enhances the values that supported the rivers’ eligibility until land ownership in the planning area is finalized. At that time, suitability determinations will be made through an amendment to the RMP.

2. In response to a protest from Lynn Canal Conservation, the BLM will defer the final determination on the establishment of an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for the Haines Block. The BLM will reconsider the application of the Importance Criteria found in BLM Manual 1613 and will provide an additional 60-day comment period to gather public input on the Haines Block ACEC. Establishment of an ACEC would require an RMP amendment. In the interim, the lands will be managed as they are currently.

**Bay:** The BLM received five protests to the Bay Proposed RMP/Final EIS, released in December 2007. The Anchorage Field Office is currently drafting language to address specific issues raised in the protest letters. The protests noted concerns about Wild and Scenic River suitability determinations, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designations, ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawal recommendations, and subsistence.

The Bay planning area originally included 3.6 million acres of BLM-administered lands. Due to land transfer, BLM lands totaled 1.9 million acres when the proposed RMP was released.



Anchorage District Office



## Iditarod National Historic Trail Centennial

The BLM and our INHT partners hosted a number of events to kick off a multi-year Centennial celebration.

- One hundred Iditarod fans braved the icy winds of Resurrection Bay in February to celebrate a kickoff event in Seward. Managers from the BLM joined Governor Sarah Palin for the event. Governor Palin issued an Executive Proclamation designating 2008 through 2012 as the official Iditarod NHT Centennial.
- BLM Centennial partner Alaska Geographic released an Iditarod NHT Centennial Visitors Guide in early March. This full-color guide offers details about Alaska's enduring trail and its rich history.
- An exhibition at the Anchorage Museum entitled "Iditarod Visionary: Joe Redington, Sr." honors the pioneering vision of this mushing legend. The exhibition includes mushing gear, dog sleds, and photographs and memorabilia tracing more than 30 years of Iditarod history. The exhibition runs February through September 2008.
- Be sure to stop by the BLM information booth at the 2008 Great Alaska Sportsman Show April 3-6, at the Sullivan Arena in Anchorage. Our booth theme is the Iditarod NHT Centennial, and we'll feature Centennial information and commemorative items for visitors!



## All Alaska Sweepstakes race permit

The Iditarod Sled Dog Race isn't the only competitive mushing event the BLM permitted this year.

AFO issued a Special Recreation Permit to the Nome Kennel Club for the 408-mile All Alaska Sweepstakes sled dog race from Nome to Candle and back. Portions of the race route and several checkpoints for the race are on BLM-administered lands. The race starts March 26, when up to 50 mushers and sled dog teams are expected to compete for a winner-takes-all guaranteed purse of \$100,000.

AFO Nome staffer, Tom Sparks, did the environmental analysis for the permit, and is helping as a community volunteer both prior and during the race. Tom helped install a temporary emergency repeater for race safety/communications and helped trail stakers GPS the race route. Tom will help staff a remote camp at Haven to monitor the race and provide trail assistance to mushers.



## Meet Geoff Byersdorf

Geoff joined the Anchorage Field Office in Jan. 2008. He was formerly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in rural Alaska, so he brings specialized knowledge to his new post as field office subsistence coordinator. Geoff represents BLM at regional subsistence meetings, where participants meet to address issues involving hunting and fishing regulations in the southern half of Alaska.



## Campbell Tract trail talk

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual **Winter Trails Day** (Feb. 16) at Campbell Tract was HUGE. An estimated 800 outdoor enthusiasts descended on the Campbell Creek Science Center to check out the latest in winter gear from event partner REI. Then they hit the trails to enjoy a day of falling snow and winter fun and fitness.

Inside the Science Center, volunteers from 12 partner organizations staffed information booths where visitors could learn more about winter adventure preparedness, hypothermia prevention, avalanche awareness, and back country safety.



While the primary goal of Winter Trails Day is to promote safe, responsible outdoor winter sports and recreation, the event also helps trail enthusiasts connect with other users. And by working with our user groups, we build partnerships that benefit both the trail system and the user.

If you missed Winter Trails Day, you'll want to save the date for **National Trails Day**, June 7, 2008, at the

Campbell Tract. This annual event engages our visitors and trail users in a morning of trail projects, fresh air, and the company of other trail enthusiasts!

**Above: Winter Trails Day visitors fitted with snowshoes or cross country or classical skis head out to Campbell Tract trails.**

### Friends Group Takes Root

The Friends of the Campbell Creek Science Center just celebrated a second successful year of operation. In two short years, the nonprofit Friends group has attracted 80 members and raised more than \$71,000 to support Science Center programs. These funds support special events at the center and help school children who cannot afford the fees to attend center programs.

In 2007 the Friends group started a \$10,000 endowment with the Alaska Community Foundation. BP recently presented the board with a \$10,000 challenge grant to grow the endowment further. The Friends are actively seeking contributions to the endowment fund to meet this challenge.

For more info about the Friends group or the Campbell Creek Science Center, contact **Science Center Manager Jeff Brune** at 267-1255.

## Glennallen Field Office news

**Tim Hammond** of the BLM Central Yukon Field Office (Fairbanks District Office) is serving a detail as the new acting field manager for the Glennallen Field Office, allowing **Will Runnoe** to return to lead recreation planner after completing a four-month field manager detail. The BLM will interview applicants for a permanent Glennallen Field Manager in the near future.



**GFO administrative building, Glennallen**



### Delta River Special Recreation Area Management Plan

Step-down planning identified in the East Alaska Resource Management Plan will continue this spring with Delta River Special Recreation Management Area planning. The BLM conducted benefits-based management (BBM) planning for the Delta River last year to identify detailed issues, objectives, and current and past use of the land by stakeholder groups.

GFO will conduct public scoping for the Delta River plan shortly and will offer a 30-day comment period and review of the issues identified during the BBM process. Comments will be used to identify issues and alternatives as we develop a draft plan tentatively scheduled for release later this year.



### Shelters, vehicles, caches posted for removal

At various locations throughout Alaska, especially in the Southcentral and Interior regions, people have constructed temporary or permanent shelters, pads, or lean-tos on public lands without a permit. Some sites include cached personal items and abandoned vehicles. With the completion of the East Alaska RMP, GFO will focus on resolving this unauthorized use in the planning area.

To do this, the BLM is asking the public for assistance and an education effort has begun, starting with an article in the next issue of *BLM-Alaska Frontiers* newsletter. The article explains that placing structures or personal property on public lands

without a permit is an unauthorized use of the lands and the property must be removed. The BLM will post the property for removal for one year. If the property is still on public land at the end of one year and the owner has not contacted the BLM, the property will then likely be removed.

Each case will be evaluated independently and within current BLM plan provisions, policies and regulations. When possible, the BLM will identify responsible parties and work with them to resolve the unauthorized use in a cooperative manner.

**Above: A GFO employee cleans out an abandoned vehicle at Slana so it can be hauled away and crushed.**

### Lake Louise to Maclaren snowmachine trail proposal

A snowmachine club in the Copper Valley has expressed interest in obtaining a grant from the State of Alaska to develop a snowmachine trail between Lake Louise and Maclaren Lodge. The club has not made a formal application to the BLM or the State of Alaska for the trail. If the club decides to formally propose a trail that would extend through BLM-managed land, the BLM, in consultation with the State of Alaska, will give the proposal full consideration through the NEPA process.

### New funding for GFO National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) units

GFO will use increased funding for NLCS units to hire two river rangers this summer. The river rangers will provide field monitoring, education, and outreach on both the **Delta and Gulkana Rivers**. The rangers will interact with river users to answer questions, encourage “Leave No Trace” camping and floating techniques, and encourage the use of portable toilets and firepans. They will also assist with invasive vegetative species management along river corridors.



Monitoring efforts over the past two seasons documented evidence of human waste above defined limits of acceptable change in the Gulkana River Management Plan. Monitoring indicators and standards may require use of portable toilets in the next few years.

GFO will continue to offer floaters the use of free portable loaner toilets this summer in an attempt to alleviate the need for stricter management. This effort will allow floaters to determine for themselves that the use of portable toilets is convenient and clean, relatively inexpensive, and can improve the camping and floating experience.

**Above right: Multiple use on the Gulkana National Wild River.**

